

The Ballarat Naturalist

April 2006



Trailing Goodenia
Goodenia lanata
(Club Logo)

GEOLOGY ROCKS

The Annual General Meeting members presentations were on the theme “Geology Rocks!!”

John Gregurke started the evening off with slides taken during the SEANA campout held at Portland in 2003 and during the recent ANN get-together in the high country. From Portland he showed a blowhole, cliffs and petrified forest at Cape Bridgewater. The most likely explanation for the formation of the petrified forest is that water with dissolved calcium percolated through sand and cemented the particles together. From the high country of Victoria he showed granite tors at Mt Buffalo, columnar jointed basalt at Ruined Castle and gneiss at the summit of Mt Nelse on the Bogong High Plain.

Lyndsay Fink continued the theme starting with Stonehenge, England. He then bought us back to Australia with a Gibber Plain in Sturts Stony Desert, Central Australia. Gibber stones are usually quartzite with smooth edges and an iron patina. Northern Territory was next with Mt. Connor, one of the 3 great monoliths; Kings Canyon showing the ripples left in the sand from ancient seas; Henbury Meteorite Crater, showing what happens when an object from outer space hits the earth and Chambers Pillar, the remains of a mountain range, named after Mr Chambers from SA. We were reminded of the Flying Doctor series with a slide of Rainbow Valley made famous in the opening scenes of the show. Lyndsay finished with the show the Beloungery Spire, Bread Knife and finally a sunset from the Warrumbungle Ranges.

Ken Hammond treated us with slides of Mt Buffalo plateau, Uluru, Kings Canyon, Chambers Pillar, Rainbow Valley, Kimberleys near Lake Argyle and Escort Rock near Eugowra in NSW being named as the result of a gold escort hold-up. On the evening Ken commented that he thought none of the gold was recovered. However, having checked Frank Clunes book Wild Colonial Boys he found that

almost half the gold was recovered two or three days after the robbery at Escort Rock. Police came across some of the bushrangers who had loaded the loot on to a packhorse, in order to escape they had to leave the horse and the gold, the aboriginal tracker Billy Dargin was the real hero in the recovery of the gold, but for his skill the gold would most likely have not been recovered. Wild Colonial Boys is a most enjoyable book.

Carol Hall's slides of the Grampians illustrated the concepts of dip slope and scarp, valleys (such as that containing Lake Bellfield) eroded in weaker bands of shale, and the way in which sediments deposited in water bodies develop structures known as current bedding. Also shown was the point of contact metamorphism between the Zumsteins granite intrusion and the neighbouring sandstone which had changed to quartzite.

The session concluded with a miscellany of subjects on the general theme shown by **Greg**. This commenced with a group of images of some varying effects of water in coastal geology. These included multicoloured water worn pebbles on the Cumbrian coast (UK), colourful mineral sands leaching from a low cliff in Darwin Harbour, textured water worn forms on a tidal sandstone shelf at Skenes Creek, and eroded calcalkaline structures at Cape Bridgewater. In contrast to these were pictures of towering basalt columns at Mt Kaputar National Park near Narrabri (NSW), and a series on groups of striking granite boulders and tors in the Australian Alpine regions.

In addition to the slides **Lyndsay Fink** and **Claire Dalman** supported the night's theme with rock specimens. Lyndsay's specimens were:

- Greenstone – from Mt William, Victoria, used by Koori people to make ground edge axes. Greenstone is altered igneous rock containing chlorite, hornblende, and epidote which give it a green tinge.
- Galena ore – from Broken Hill – also contains silver-lead-zinc and others plus garnets.
- Opal-bearing rock from Coober Pedy
- Peacock rock "Bornite" – copper-bearing ore.
- Red Jasper (chalcedony) from WA where it is common.
- Common opal, Victoria – of no value.
- Petrified wood – polished.
- Pyrope garnets from a kimberlite pipe at Meredith, Victoria – indicator for diamond.
- Agate – Victoria
- Coral – Victoria – Eventually becomes limestone.
- Fossilised Mussel – Coober Pedy
- Pink Quartz
- Gibber from Sturts Stony Desert – the actual rock is quartzite.
- Zebra rock – from Kunnunurra.

EXCURSION: WESTERN TREATMENT PLANT SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2006

A group of 13 traveled to Werribee to visit the Melbourne Water Western Treatment Plant. The weather was cool with low cloud and fog around Gordon but milder when we neared the coast and it was not long before the sun was shining.

As we entered along Farm Road bush birds seen included Magpie, Willy Wagtail, Starling and Crested Pigeon. A large group of birdwatchers were at the Conservation Pond so we drove on to the Borrow Pits. Waders in the shallow water were Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed, Marsh and Curlew Sandpiper. In deeper water Red-necked Avocet and Black-winged Stilt were feeding. Among a group of avocet were two species of godwit; Black-tailed Godwit were identified with their straight bill and some black bars along the flank, while Bar-tailed Godwit have slightly upturned bills. A Red-kneed Dotterel was walking along the water's edge. (We later saw a puzzling grey and white bird but after looking at field guides decided it was an immature example of this species). In the deep water of the adjacent lagoon were a variety of ducks including Australian Shelduck, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Chestnut Teal, Hardhead and Hoary-headed Grebe.

We had an early lunch in the shade of a patch of Moonah *Melaleuca lanceolata*. A pair of Mistletoebird landed in the tree above us. Magpie Lark and Goldfinch flew overhead. White-fronted Chat fed among the samphire.

Few birds were at the Conservation Pond; many had left for the beach to feed as the tide receded. A few White and Straw-necked Ibis were feeding on the drying mud. Martin Hulzerdosch, a bird watcher from Werribee, was able to show us a Wood Sand-piper that was standing cryptically on dried mud near a weedy plant. He helped us find Double-banded Plover that also blended well with the dry mud. Martin had seen Long-toed Stint in the area. The Great Cormorant that flew past was much easier to identify!

On the East side of the Little River we saw Common Greenshank and a White-faced Heron flew downstream. In Walsh's Lagoon, among large numbers of Black Swan and ducks there was one Shelduck with unusual colouring. It had a pale grey head and the light chestnut of the breast extended to the flanks and abdomen.

Our next stop was at Paradise Lagoon where the Little Curlew had been seen recently. Greg scanned the far side of the lagoon and soon found a lone bird moving through the grass. The 30cm long bird could only be seen when it was standing erect. Little Curlew is a rare bird at Werribee, although large numbers are found

in dry grasslands of northern Australia. It is believed to make a non-stop flight of 5000 kilometres between China and Australia. At the western end of the lagoon was a flock of 11 Cape Barren Geese.

Roosting on the dead trees in Lake Borrie were many cormorants including Pied Cormorant and Little Black Cormorant. Pelicans were standing on nesting boxes, how do they land? A large flock of ducks took to the air and we could hear the unducklike chirrup of Pink-eared Duck. Freckled Ducks were perched on the usual basalt rocks in the southern section of Lake Borrie.

At Kirk Point we added to the birdlist with Crested and Little Tern, Pacific Gull and Pied Oystercatcher. We had afternoon tea before commencing our journey home. Thanks to Greg Binns for leading the excursion and all the permit holders for organizing entry to Western Treatment Plant

Birdlist 63 species

Australasian Grebe
Australasian Shoveler
Australian Hobby
Australian Magpie
Australian Pelican
Australian Shelduck
Australian White Ibis
Australian Wood Duck
Bar-tailed Godwit
Black Swan
Black-tailed Godwit
Black-winged Stilt
Blue-billed Duck
Cape Barren Goose
Chestnut Teal
Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Common Greenshank
Common Starling
Crested Pigeon
Crested Tern
Curlew Sandpiper
Double-banded Plover
Eurasian Coot
European Goldfinch
Fairy Martin
Freckled Duck
Great (Black) Cormorant
Grey Teal
Hardhead
Hoary-headed Grebe
Little Black Cormorant
Little Curlew
Little Pied Cormorant

Little Raven
Little Tern
Long-toed Stint
Magpie-lark
Marsh Sandpiper
Masked Lapwing
Mistletoebird
Musk Duck
Pacific Black Duck
Pacific Gull
Pied Cormorant
Pied Oystercatcher
Pink-eared Duck
Purple Swamphen
Red Wattlebird
Red-capped Plover
Red-kneed Dotterel
Red-necked Avocet
Red-necked Stint
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Silver Gull
Straw-necked Ibis
Superb Fairy-wren
Swamp Harrier
Tree Martin
Welcome Swallow
Whistling Kite
White-faced Heron
White-fronted Chat
Willy Wagtail



John Gregurke

FNC Ballarat Minutes of General Meeting 3rd March 2006

The President welcomed 31 members and visitors.

Apologies have been received from: Elaine Gregurke, Dulcie Brooke, Frank Harrap, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Eileen Anderson.

M: Pat Murphy

S: Peter Billing

Minutes of previous meeting

M: Del McDonnell S: Greg Binns

Business Arising: Nil

Correspondence

IN:

- Bendigo Bank Statement for February
- Field Nats News No. 151 March 2006
- Friends of Brisbane Ranges March 2006
- Royal Horticultural Society newsletter Autumn
- Wombat News and Views Issue 11
- Whirrakee Jan/Feb 2006
- Castlemaine Naturalist February 2006
- Geelong Naturalist February 2006
- Under Control December 2005
- Environment Victoria News Jan/Feb 2006
- VCAT notice of hearing in Melbourne April 26 re vegetation clearance at Ditchfield Lane.
- Ballarat City Council notice of council meeting re sewerage pipeline at Ditchfield Lane.
- Phone to Claire – prospective new member 1020 Havelock St.- lady studying Horticulture – new syllabus to be sent when available.
- Phone to Greg Binns – Dereel Action Group requests a letter of support for application for funding towards Dereel Swamp walking trail.

OUT: Cheques to FNCV \$55 affiliation and Australian Natural History Medallion \$25 donation.

Business Arising from Correspondence:

John Gregurke attended council meeting – he had put in a submission – council approved removal of vegetation to put in sewage line; objectors invited to be advisers re care in vegetation removal. But before that, VCAT had refused permission for the proposed subdivision of land in Springs Rd, requiring the developers to submit more appropriate plans.

Secretary has written a short letter for Dereel Action Group c/o Lorraine Carrenza.

Correspondence accepted: M: Ken McDonnell S: Lyndsay Fink

Reports

Treasurer's Report:

Opening Balance: \$3759.74 Closing balance: \$3677.18

Moved: Les Hanrahan Seconded: Ken Hammond

General Business

Syllabus finalised:

- April lecture – Ern Perkins speaking on Plants of Semi-Arid areas; he will also have copies of a CD of plants of the Mt Alexander shire available for \$7.
- April excursion with Joan Endacott to the Daylesford-Hepburn area – emphasis on plants.
- Fixture card available at April meeting.
- September campout details available by email or hard copy.
- Notice of Members' Presentations opportunity for August 4th.

Field Reports

- Ken McDonnell: at Creswick, Tree Frog in residence in self-watering pot reservoir.
- Frank Harrap (via John Mildren) 6 Common Bronzewing Pigeons in Shire Avenue, Mt Helen on Feb.10.
- Nina Netherway: at Buninyong Rd, Echidna walking across road mid-afternoon in Feb.
- John Gregurke: at Lake Burrumbeet, 6 Blue-winged Parrots, 2 Brolgas, 1 Black Falcon.
- At Lake Wendouree, a feeding frenzy between Grammar and High School Boatsheds of 8 Royal Spoonbills, 6 Yellow-billed Spoonbills, 8 White Ibis, 11 White-faced Herons, 6 Gt Egrets, 1 Pelican, 1 Black Duck, 100 Silver Gulls, 4 Coots, 1 Swan.
- Greg Binns: Female Tailed Spider in web (illustrated on whiteboard).
- Pat Murphy; at Victoria Park, pleasant patch of parkland opposite Urquhart Park Primary School – plantings of Australian species eg Eucalyptus alpina (Grampians Gum) and various other eucalypts and casuarinas.
- Carol Hall: In the *Courier* 4/3/06 public notices: A one-off 150Ml allocation of water for Lake Wendouree will begin to flow at 3-4Ml per day from the Gong Gong Reservoir to prevent excessive amounts of water milfoil

from dying due to falling water levels. Reduced levels of lake weed could put at risk the success of the plans to divert treated effluent from the Ballarat North Treatment Plant which relies on lake plants absorbing nutrients from it.

Excursion arrangements: Werribee Treatment Works: meet at usual place for 8.a.m. departure.

Syllabus Item: Members' Images: *Geology Rocks!!* Slides were presented by Ken Hammond, Lyndsay Fink, Carol Hall, Greg Binns. Lyndsay Fink and Claire Dalman brought in a most interesting array of hand specimens.

**FNC BALLARAT
MINUTES OF 53RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
3RD MARCH 2006.**

Opening and Welcome The president Peter Dalman welcomed 31 members.

Apologies have been received from: Elaine Gregurke, Dulcie Brooke, Frank Harrap, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Eileen Anderson.

Moved: Pat Murphy Seconded: Peter Billing Carried.

Minutes of 52nd Annual General Meeting were read by the Secretary.

Moved: John Gregurke Seconded; Lyndsay Fink Carried.

President's Report was presented by Peter Dalman – see attached.

Moved: Peter Dalman Seconded: Helen Burgess Carried

Treasurer's Report. See attached.

Moved: Les Hanrahan Seconded: Maureen Christie Carried.

The Auditor Graeme Reynolds sent his good wishes for the coming year.

Election of Office Bearers

Nominations received:

President: Peter Dalman

Vice President: Greg Binns

Secretary: Carol Hall

Treasurer: Les Hanrahan

Committee: Claire Dalman, Maureen Christie, Pat Murphy,
John Gregurke, John and Alison Williams, Helen Burgess.

General Business.

Club subscription: Committee recommends subscriptions be maintained at current levels.

Moved: John Williams Seconded: Claire Dalman Carried.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.

CALENDAR

April

- Fri 7 Ern Perkins “Plants of Semi-Arid Regions”.
Sun 9 Daylesford—Hepburn Region led by Joan Endacott

May

- Fri 5 Andy Arnold “Brush-tailed Phascogales—
their life history and ecology”.
Sun 7 Excursion: Bamganie Flora and Fauna reserve led by Greg Binns

Supper Duty:

April:	Del McDonnell
May:	Pat and Bill Murphy
June	Helen Burgess

Committee

President..... Mr Peter Dalman
Vice-President..... Mr Greg Binns
Secretary..... Mrs Carol Hall
Treasurer Mr Les Hanrahan

Miss Helen Burgess.....	Mrs Pat Murphy.....
Miss Maureen Christie	Mrs Claire Dalman
Mr John Gregurke.....	

Correspondence: PO Box 328W, Ballarat West, 3350

Website: www.ballarat.yourguide.com.au Click on Local Info. Search Environment

Meetings are held at Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory & Gillies Sts (VicRoads 254 F8) on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

Excursions: depart from Ballarat market Place (formerly Creswick Plaza) Creswick Rd., Ballarat (VicRoads 255 M10) at 9.30am unless otherwise specified.

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